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A Guide to
Academic Dishonesty:
Cheating, Plagiarism, and AI
For Aquinas Writing Advantage Students

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An Introduction to Academic Dishonesty

Overview

This document outlines Academic Dishonesty as it pertains to plagiarism, AI use, and the consequences of plagiarism. It also details Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool types that can lead to plagiarism.

- **Definition:** Plagiarism is defined as taking someone else's work and submitting it as your own. Plagiarism can include paraphrasing, submitting digital or hard copy content as your own (from the Internet, books, or AI), using AI to ideate or draft content, or copying content and changing the words. Plagiarism is considered theft and lying.
- **AI Tools:** AI tools that can result in plagiarism include Writing Enhancement Tools, Content Generation Tools, AI Chatbots, and Plagiarism Checkers.
- **Assignments & Grade:** At AWA, because our goal is to help you engage in critical thinking and original composition, the use of any AI Chat GPT-type text creation tool is not permitted. Students who use AI will receive a zero on the assignment. However, we're here to help you avoid plagiarism in its many forms, and we will do all we can to help you identify and avoid plagiarism that is both "traditional" in nature and "new" through AI use.

I.   What is Academic Dishonesty?

Academic dishonesty, in the most basic terms, is using the work of someone else as your own, and it includes cheating, incorrect AI use, and plagiarism. The use of AI is discussed a little later in this document.

II.   Cheating Defined

Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Using memory aids during tests or quizzes** without the instructor's expressed permission
- **Using summaries or commentaries** (Spark Notes, Cliff Notes, etc.) instead of reading the required works
- **Accessing answer keys** before completing homework or taking a test or quiz
- **Copying partial or full answers from another student,** regardless of the assignment, test, or quiz, even if you put the answers into your own words
- **Receiving help from another**, including a student, friend, or family member (beyond what has been expressed in the class as acceptable help)

III.   Plagiarism Defined

The act of plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- **Taking someone else's assignment** and submitting it as your own (any idea used, general or verbatim, that is not your own)
- **Paraphrasing the ideas of another author** without giving the name and source, including copying text and switching out words to try to make it your own
- **Submitting hard-copy, digital, and AI-generated content** from the Internet, books, published or unpublished works, and/or Artificial Intelligence as your own
- **Copying text from an AI-generator tool** with or without switching out words
- **"Right clicking" on text changes from an AI-generator** writing check tool with or without switching out words
- **Providing your work to another student** to be copied (supporting plagiarism)

IV.   Beyond Words

Cheating and plagiarism don't only occur in writing. They can occur across all disciplines and grade levels when a student copies the work of another student (e.g., looking at another student's test and copying an answer, or copying homework answers partially or in full).

Here are some other examples of areas where plagiarism can occur unless you are attributing the content and ideas to a source:

- **Math and Sciences:** Using a Google search or AI platform to solve math and other scientific equations; using a calculator when instructed not to; copying information from a website and submitting it without proper academic attribution
- **Languages:** Using a Google search or other website to translate assignments; using AI platforms like ChatGPT to translate or generate work; submitting translations or other work that students did not complete on their own
- **Religion:** Using Bible verses not attributed to a book and verse/to the Bible; passing off a homily or sermon as your own ideas; copying the words of Church doctrine, etc.
- **Test Taking:** Looking at another student's test to copy answers (attempting to cheat); copying answers from another student's test (acting on cheating); helping another student copy from either your own test or another's test (aiding in another's cheating)

V.   Plagiarism is Theft and Lying

The moral implications of plagiarism and cheating defraud the instructor of the opportunity to assess your work and ability. Your instructor is here to give you help to become a better critical thinker and writer. Cheating, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty have moral implications.

VI.   Cheating, Plagiarism, and Self

In the end, submitting someone else's work as your own actually hurts you. Assignments are meant for students to demonstrate an understanding of a specific lesson or content, ideas from a specific unit or chapter of study, and so on. Using someone else's material (i.e., copying answers, copying others' content, and using AI to generate answers) does not demonstrate *your* understanding of the material but that of the other student or source from whom you copied materials. Using another's materials deceives the instructor into believing that you understand, or do not understand, the material.

At the heart of the plagiarism issue is that students are not demonstrating an understanding of the material. What is submitted is, quite literally, the understanding of someone else. Should a student find him or herself at a moment when there is a need to demonstrate knowledge learned (as on a test or quiz), the student might not be able to perform because of not understanding the material.

Both cheating and plagiarism also undermine a student's own perspective, especially when writing essays and papers. Writing assignments usually ask for the student to express his or her own perspective, opinion, and understanding. However, if the student cheats or plagiarizes, the student is not sharing an opinion; the student is sharing someone else's perspective. Essentially, plagiarizing is "silencing your own voice," which only cheats you, the student, in the end.

VII. Grading and Academic Dishonesty

1. The **first incident** of academic dishonesty results in a score of zero (0) for the assignment. Your parents will be notified, and you'll be placed on academic probation, which means that a second intentional act of dishonesty can lead to more serious consequences, such as leaving the course.
2. The **second incident** results in expulsion from the course without a refund.

The above consequences are similar to those used in colleges and universities. In some instances, you could be expelled from an institution itself if the incident is serious enough or if it is repeated too many times.

AI and Academic Dishonesty
What is AI? Why is it a concern for plagiarism?

Overview

Over the last few years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a prime tool contributing to cheating and plagiarism. Although there are different forms of AI, all AI tools rely on using a wide variety of data and source material to generate anything from text to images to short movies. The information that AI generates is taken from the work of other people, so when a student uses AI to write, the AI platform or program searches the web/Internet to find previously written material about the student's request. That source material is then taken, reorganized and rewritten, and passed on to the student as a "new" text. But it is not new. It is someone else's work.

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I.   Writing Enhancement Tools

Using any AI program to generate any material for any assignment is considered plagiarism because material is being taken from other sources without giving proper citation or credit. The AI-generated text is passed off as the original work of someone else. There are too many AI tools to list, but below, you will see several writing enhancement tools that lead to plagiarism.

Writing enhancement tools "help" the writer change text to what AI considers "more" acceptable, academic, or correct (by the AI's standards). By using the tool, students are not creating their own text; they are copying a text from the AI generation. The result is that students are not thinking critically to write; they are copying what a tool has created. Likewise, the tool and AI does not know your assignment's guidelines, nor does it know the "AWA Simplified Writing rules" that we use regarding pronouns, specific nouns, active verbs, sentence structure, sentence length variation, and so on. Therefore, use of writing enhancement tools in an education setting for students is considered plagiarism.

The following four common tools are not your average "spell check" systems; they go above and beyond correcting comma errors and spelling. Instead, these tools provide content suggestions, changing or rewriting the text for the student. Furthermore, the suggestions that AI tools make can be misleading or incorrect.

Be sure to turn "off" and avoid the following AI writing enhancement tools:
   a. **Microsoft Word:** "Intelligent Editor"
   b. **Google Searches:** "Vertex AI Search"
   c. **Google Docs:** Generative AI "Help Me Write" (Gemini, Edge)
   d. **Grammarly**

II.   Content Generation Tools

Content generation tools respond to prompt questions to create content. Content is culled from existing copyrighted material that is online and published.

The pull of content from other sources is currently being contested by organizations such as the Author's Guild. Since using copyrighted material without the expressed permission of the author is considered theft, legal battles are ensuing from AI companies "stealing" author content to train their systems. Often, content generation tools' text includes verbatim text from a copyrighted text.

The following are content generation tools that can be considered plagiarism tools:
   e. Chat GPT
   f. GPT-3.5
   g. Canva
   h. DeepL
   i. Character.AI
   j. Socratic
   k. Jasper
   l. Hemingway Editor
   m. QuillBot

III.   AI Chatbots

A chatbot is a computer program designed to mimic a real-life conversation with another person. The chatbot application is popular with customer service industries and specific tasks, such as marketing. There are so many AI chatbots that we cannot list them here; however, we have listed some popular tools below. If you are not sure if a tool is a chatbot, then check online to find out.

As with content generation tools, chatbots contribute to plagiarism and cheating by culling information from other works and using machine learning to create text. With chatbot tools, students still are not using critical thinking and learning to produce unique personal work.

Avoid using the following tools, to avoid plagiarism:
    n. **Chat GPT** (conversational/query tool for answering questions
    o. **Microsoft Copilot**
    p. **Anthrophic's Claude** (generation of text, data, code, images, and more)
    q. **Perplexity.ai** (conversational/query tool for answering questions)
    r. **Jasper** (AI platform for marketers)

IV.   Plagiarism Checkers

Plagiarism checkers can be "reverse-engineered" to cheat and plagiarize. Individuals can intentionally use a plagiarism checker to paste large chunks of text from other sources, find sections that closely match existing content, and then copy and paste the content into their work without proper attribution. For a list of popular plagiarism checkers (2025), please read "The 8 Best Online Plagiarism Checkers for Teachers and Students."

Examples of programs with plagiarism checkers include, but are not limited to, the following:
    s. **Grammarly:** Note for parents, if a student uses Grammarly to correct work, then the Grammarly grammar check program can state that the work was not plagiarized – though it was. This is because the system is simply checking itself, which (ironically) the AI believes is unique, though generated from other content and without student critical thinking.
    t. **Copyscape**
    u. **Plagiarism Detector**
    v. **Quetext**
    w. **Zero GPT**
    x. **Scribbr**

V.   More Problems with Using AI: "AI Hallucination"

One of the more difficult problems resulting from using AI to write content is something called *AI hallucination*. AI hallucination is the ability of a tool to create a result that seems correct and accurate, but upon further investigation, the content is actually incorrect and inaccurate.

AI hallucination is a serious issue. The biggest problem with AI hallucination is that students developing academic writing and researching skills might not be able to discern fact from fallacy. When a student uses an AI-hallucinated answer in his or her writing, not only is the act plagiarism, but it is also inaccurate.

Here's how it happens: For any AI platform to generate an answer to a prompt, the AI platform needs what IBM calls "training data." Training data includes all of the sources and information (data) that the AI platform is programmed to access, to use as the basis for creating an answer. According to IBM, the training data needed for an AI platform to operate well needs to be "diverse, balanced and well-structured data. This will help [the AI platform] minimize output bias, better understand its tasks and yield more effective outputs." When the platform has a wide set of sources from which to draw upon, results tend to answer prompts better.

However, narrow or biased data can be used to train an AI system. IBM asserts that when AI platforms have a narrow set of training data, or if that training data is in some way biased (drawing on sources and information that only present a small portion or side of a considerably larger and more complex topic), the result may be an incorrect or inaccurate answer – an AI hallucination.

Scholars at MIT reinforce the dangers of AI hallucinations. According to MIT, the common, often-used "AI tools like ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini have been found to provide users with fabricated data that appears authentic [but is not]." Students who are just learning to write more academic style texts are also developing the ability to distinguish between proper, strong, true sources and sources that provide inaccurate or incorrect information. When an AI platform returns information with no sources, it becomes even more difficult for students to discern between correct, accurate information and information that is not correct and accurate.

Additionally, MIT emphasizes the "inherent challenges in AI design: The technology behind generative AI tools isn't designed to differentiate between what's true and what's not true." Especially when AI platforms do not have the necessary breadth and depth of training data to use to generate an accurate result, there are no inherent guardrails to determine the truth of the AI's answer. In the end, an AI platform's "goal is to generate plausible content, not to verify its truth" (MIT).

So what does this mean for a student? There is a chance, depending upon the topic, how the prompt is written, and the AI platform in use, that the resulting answer could be incorrect, inaccurate, or even completely false.

In the end, it is best that students rely on supplied sources and specific, targeted research. Start with your course's educational material and required readings. Course sources and targeted research will also provide students better opportunities to demonstrate understanding and learning to the instructors.

Works Cited
IBM. "What are AI hallucinations?" *IBM.com*. September 1, 2023. www.ibm.com/think/topics/ai-hallucinations

MIT. "When AI Gets It Wrong: Addressing AI Hallucinations and Bias." *MIT Sloan Teaching & Learning Technologies*. mitsloanedtech.mit.edu/ai/basics/addressing-ai-hallucinations-and-bias/. Accessed February 20, 2025.

VI.   Using AI for Idea or Content Generation

It's important to know: Using AI for idea generation can lead to plagiarism. Using AI for content generation is plagiarism.

Why? In short, it's because AI "scrapes" content from already-published sources.

A. Using AI for Idea Generation (Brainstorming)

Writing is thinking. We want writers to become great thinkers, able to think through and write with clarity. When writing this guide, we asked AI to tell us why it's not good for brainstorming. What's fun (and funny), is that even AI clearly knows that its use is not good for the student. Here's its list (with our notes added in the far-right column).

A List of Reasons Not to Use AI for Idea Generation

ChatGPT's Reason (AI)	ChatGPT's Explanation (AI)	AWA Leadership's Notes on AI's Explanation
1. Creative laziness	AI use skips the hard work that leads to better ideas.	We become better writers by writing, and we can't shortcut the process and get a good outcome.
2. Cliches and generic ideas	AI often repeat familiar patterns.	This is perhaps our most concerning part of the list. AI pulls from existing materials – even if they're wrong!
3. Loss of original voice	AI may influence your unique style.	We want each student to develop a unique voice, and that only happens when you think and write your own content.
4. Lack of emotional depth	AI can't capture personal insight.	AI is machine based. We want your writing to be full of humanity!
5. Dependency and distraction	AI use can reduce confidence and focus.	Depending on AI to do the work is risky. It doesn't let you mold and shape the content in a linear, focused process of completing the work. Knowing your start-to-finish, overarching ideas that lead to a finished product is a skill that you must have for the future – and AI takes that skill away.
6. Ethical concerns	Some writers want work to be fully their own.	Okay, AI got this point completely wrong. Ethics isn't about "some writers"; it's about all writers. All writers' work should be their own. Again – AI use is plagiarism, which is stealing other hard-working writers' content.

You might ask the obvious question: So why can we, the leadership of AWA, use AI to generate the above six reasons for why AI is not good to use for content ideation? Well, this is an "ironic lesson" to demonstrate that even AI itself admits limitations. It's not because we can't think of the above ideas or don't know the content. This exercise was to show that AI admits its own weaknesses.

And finally, know that the above AI-generated list had multiple errors in writing – errors that we had to fix. The items were not parallel. Some items were in incomplete sentences. And the order wasn't the "best" for linear presentation. We had to fix the AI's content, including creating complete sentences and reorganizing the content. We can do this because we're professional writers of many years who've gone through the learning in high school, college, and professionally. We've learned how to think and write. And that's exactly what we want you to do. Then, and only then, should you carefully and ethically use AI for ideation and brainstorming, because you can then "fix" the ideas with clarity, based on your experience.

B. Using AI for Content Generation (Writing/Drafting)

Even when the content is significantly edited or revised, using content generation AI tools to create written material for an assignment "steals" others' work, which constitutes plagiarism.

Also, when using AI to generate content and make minor tweaks or edits, you are not using critical thinking. (The best writers are critical thinkers!) When a tool "tweaks" your work, since the bulk of the work is "done for you," your ability to think critically is cut short. You're not able to become the writer you can be. And the use of AI-generated content to shortcut to learning is antithetical to the purpose of education.

Writing assignments are meant to increase your ability to think critically and engage with the written word. As any AI-generated content is considered plagiarism, at AWA, all writing assignments must be entirely written by the student.

Again, at AWA, all writing assignments must be entirely written by the student.

VII.   Take Action to Avoid AI Plagiarism

Step 1: Know the AI tools and what they do.
– **Read** this document all the way through (and follow its advice).
– **Try out** the AI and plagiarism tools with your parents and/or teachers/tutors to understand their capabilities.
– **Discuss** with your parents and/or teachers/tutors how the tools may or may not be used in your courses with Aquinas Writing Advantage.
– **Ask questions.** When in doubt as to whether you are correctly using a tool – or if a tool can even be used – reach out to your instructor.

Step 2: Avoid the most common AI tools when writing.
– **Stay away** from the AI tools mentioned here.
– **Turn off** the automatic tools in your most-used content generation and search functions, especially Microsoft Word, Google docs, and Grammarly.
– **Avoid** asking Google and other AI tools general or specific questions from your course assignments and activities.

Step 3: Be honest with yourself.
– **Recognize** that using an AI tool even once to change your text interferes with your learning.
– **Plan** your time wisely, with enough time to think critically and create original text through deep thinking.
– **Be honest** with how much time an assignment will take to complete (usually, assignments take more time than you initially think).
– **Complete** assignments early, to have enough time to do your best work without being tempted to rely on AI and get caught up in plagiarism practices.

Step 4: Know when it's okay to use AI tools.
– **Ask** your instructor if there are specific guidelines for online content searches, particularly for the AWA pre-college and creative writing courses.
– **Understand** which parts of an assignment must not use AI and search tools.
– **Be committed** to following the course guidelines for AI use, so that you will learn and grow in your abilities to think critically and communicate at a higher level.

Student Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism:
Using Others' Content for Evidence

Overview

Plagiarism occurs when anyone copies material word for word from another source and uses it as his or her own. To maintain academic honesty, students must always cite their sources when using others' content. Any information from an outside source, including direct quotations, summaries, or paraphrases, should be cited.

If a student does not properly cite sources, then plagiarism occurs. Additionally, using AI to write content in full or in part constitutes plagiarism.

Tip #1: Cite Quoted Content with Sources

A citation, or citing your material, is simply noting the source of where the information came from and "who said it." Citations include all information needed for the reader to find the content in its original place (whether that's in a hard-copy book, online, or at another source).

Citations are required. Any information that is not your own must be either placed in quotation marks and cited or marked as cited, in the case of using general ideas, summaries, or a paraphrase of others' content.

For example, if a student is writing about the main character of a short story, the student may choose to go online to read more about the story and character. If the student finds an interesting perspective about the character at a website, then the student may be tempted to copy a sentence from that site into his or her paper. The moment of copying content, either word-for-word or in a summary or paraphrase, is where plagiarism can take place. If the student does not state where the material came from, then the student is plagiarizing.

Noting "where the information came from" is called *citing.* If the content is not cited (the student pastes a quote or content ideas into the essay without attribution to the source), then the student is plagiarizing.

All content that you use as evidence or "proof of a point" must be cited. Also, all numbers such as amounts, percentages, and so on must be cited. And anything that is "not common knowledge" must be cited.

All citations are "attributions" that reference where content came from. To not plagiarize, students must 1) place quotation marks around all direct-word content, with a citation note following, and 2) place a citation for any ideas not the student's own. Trying to pass off another person's idea as his or her own and ignoring or forgetting attribution is plagiarism.

Tip #2: Cite Summarized and Paraphrased Content with Sources

As stated above, all content not your own must be cited, including content that you have summarized or paraphrased. Summaries and paraphrases do not excuse the need for citation. Paraphrasing is when students read and internalize an idea and then write the content in their own words. Often, plagiarism occurs when a student tries to rewrite another's content by simply replacing a few words of an original idea. However, if the student does not state who first said the idea or where the student found the idea (again, the student is using another person's ideas), even with switched-out words, the student's work is considered plagiarism.

Attributing non-original content to a source is standard and required. To avoid all plagiarism issues, students must use *proper academic attributions* to all words, ideas, opinions, and findings originating with another person.

At AWA, what are *proper academic attributions*? There are many styles for attributions, based on numerous *style guides*. Most schools and universities determine which style guides to use. At Aquinas Writing Advantage, we use the Chicago style of attribution. However, use of the Chicago style is not required in any course until the senior-level, pre-college courses (12 Series).

For all other writing courses, citations are usually informal and determined by the course. In each assignment, instructions are often given to create a *general citation note*. To create a general citation note, first, make sure that all direct-idea materials are in quotation marks. Then, provide the source (where you found the material), the author's last name (or first and last name), and a page number, if given. If the source is a web address, give the full address to the specific page where you found the information. The attribution can then be created at the bottom of the page, to show where the information came from. If using a number of sources, use a footnote number or create what's called an *in-text citation.*

In-text citations are found in parentheses immediately after the quotation. An in-text citation is formatted as so: (*author last name, year, page number*). Then, at the end of the document, the full information of "where you got it" is placed. Again, this is an informal citation method that teachers use to check your sources.

Note, especially with websites, it is sometimes better to provide the author's full name and the article or page title before presenting the quoted material. And if you have any questions at any time, reach out to your instructor.

Tip #3: Reference Examples

To properly use, quote, and cite source material, it's easy to look at others' written work as examples to "see what goes where." Here is an example of correct attribution/citation with a footnote.

> **Example 1: Footnote Citation**
> In her article "Important Parts of a Story," Michelle Smith defines a protagonist as, "quoted material."[footnote number here, and the source will be at the bottom of your content/document]

When a citation shows the **author**, the **source**, and the **page number** in the text, the citation is called an in-text citation; the in-text note tells the reader/teacher that material from another person has just been quoted or used. Here is an example:

> **Example 2: in-Text Citation**
> In the article "Important Parts of a Story," a protagonist is, "[put your quoted material here]" (Smith, 2022, p. 25). [Note, the period goes after the in-text citation in parentheses. The full source location information will then be placed at the bottom of the document.]

For both footnote and in-text citations, if your source does not have page numbers, no page number is listed in parentheses after the quotation or in the citation.

Though different courses have different requirements for citation, in every course, cite any content that is not your own. When in doubt as to whether to use a footnote or in-text citation, reach out to your instructor. Your assignment description in Caravel will tell you how and where the teacher would like the complete reference placed at the bottom of your document.

The 12 Series courses, which are pre-college and Advanced Placement (AP) in nature, have strict guidelines for citations. In the 12 Series courses, you will create a "References" page at the end of your document that includes the author's full name, the full title of the source, the title of the website (or book, magazine, journal, newspaper), the company that maintains the site or publishes the source, as well as the publication date (use "Accessed on" and the date the source was accessed if the website does not have a specific publication date). Each of these elements will be taught in the course and are expected to be used.

For more detailed information and directions about writing in-text citations, please visit <u>Purdue's Online Writing Lab</u>. You'll find information about citation styles and more information about avoiding plagiarism.

Tip #4: Use a Quick Checklist

Checklists are great for making sure that you are following requirements and directions. Here is a quick checklist that can be used for any course to avoid plagiarism.

    a. All **data and numbers** MUST be cited.
    b. Any words, phrases, or sentences **taken directly from another source** MUST be in **quotation marks.**
    c. **All quotes MUST be cited** (in-text citations and Works Cited/Bibliography page).
    d. When **summarizing or paraphrasing** (rewording someone else's ideas into your own language), you MUST cite the author and source from where you gained that information.
    e. All information **not in the general public knowledge base** MUST be cited.
    f. **If you have a question** about a source or an idea from a source that you think would work well in an assignment, talk to your instructor. Show them the site and the specific information you want to use. Explain why you want to use it. Work together with your instructor to determine the best way to include that information and how to cite that information correctly.

Tip #5: Avoid Using AI Tools

When writing any assignment or completing any coursework at AWA, **students should not use AI writing enhancement, content generation tools, or chatbots** unless the instructor makes an exception and explicitly states to do so.

AI tools can lead to cheating. Since writing students are learning the art of crafting sentences, paragraphs, and essays, using an AI program to complete coursework is considered cheating. Just like asking a friend to complete an assignment is cheating, using AI to write an essay or a book report is academically dishonest. Even though AI can be "cited," relying on AI to complete coursework robs you, the student, of the learning experience that the course is designed to provide. Take responsibility for completing assignments without AI.

Parent Tips to Help Students
Avoid Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Overview

AI is everywhere, and both parents and students must be aware of its permeation into all aspects of our lives. Together, we can help students to understand and avoid academic dishonesty. We are here to help you, and if you have any questions or concerns, you can reach out to us at any time.

Tip #1: Review Plagiarism Policies

Remind your student(s) of what constitutes plagiarism. *Each semester*, review the definition of plagiarism with your student(s).

Tip #2: Emphasize Time Management

Time Management is a critical part of avoiding plagiarism. If a student waits too long to complete an assignment, he or she may be tempted to use another's content (copying from a source or using AI).

A concrete plan for completing assignments early can help students avoid the temptation to plagiarize. Parents – please know that to learn how to manage time well, all students need a helping hand. Here at AWA, we encourage students and parents to have a regular check-in after the LIVE class or viewing of the class recording.

During your check-in time, **use the Assignment and Grade Record sheet** provided to gain an overview of the assignments due that week. (The page is located in every course, under the section called "Important Documents" on the left navigation bar of the Caravel course page.)

Also, it is recommended that you go through the current class page together. At the top of each class page, an overview of activities and the week's content is listed. Scroll down the page together, to make sure the student sees and understands the content's location and scope. Taking the time together for an overview is critical to appropriately planning the weeks' work.

To fully plan the work together, look at the final due date and create a "backwards plan" for going through the content required before the assignment. Figure out how much time should be spent working on the assignment. Together, for each course week element, write down concrete milestones to meet in order to complete the assignment(s) on time. Parents, be sure to include time in your schedule to review any cited sources before the student's final submission.

Learning time management starts in middle school and goes through a student's senior year in high school. Many students and parents mistakenly believe that students already have the skills needed for effective time management. Please don't default on or retreat from the critical step of learning how to manage time. It is normal and expected to *work together* with your student on assignment time management skills.

Tip #3: Monitor the Writing Process

We understand that parents want their students to be independent; however, **AWA firmly believes that middle and high school students benefit from parental guidance and oversight,** especially when students are creating text.

Set aside time to talk with your student about any writing assignments they are working on. Ask the student how they are writing the assignment and if they are using the Internet to find ideas. Ask the student to show you the sites used. You might even want to skim the source, to be aware of the content and potential plagiarism. Finally, take time with your student to review what they wrote. If you notice ideas that seem too close to or exactly like what you read from the sources, have a conversation with your student.

Tip #4: Block and/or Turn off AI Tools

Many tools can be turned off or blocked. On Google or another trusted search engine, search "how to turn off [name here]" for each type of tool used. Changing the settings before your student has any assignments to complete will help to minimize the ability to access tools when completing an assignment. Granted, students are savvy and might find a "workaround" to your changes, so…

Tip #5: Check Browsing History

Check the student's browsing history to see if the student used any of the AI tools or sites listed in this guide. Sit down with your student to review any sites that seem questionable. Ask your student how a questionable site was used. Review your students' assignments when possible.

How to Connect with Your Student's Instructor to Solve Plagiarism Concerns

Overview

If your instructor reaches out to you to inform you of suspected plagiarism, be assured that we are here to work together in the best way possible for success – to help your student become the best he or she can be.

I.   Suspecting Plagiarism

Instructors and teachers often check for plagiarism. A question from your instructor about whether your student has plagiarized doesn't mean that your student is "bad" or that you're "in the worst trouble ever!" While plagiarism concerns are serious, we want you to know that instructors always bring up plagiarism concerns with the goal of helping your student learn and grow.

We always begin by asking questions. Questioning a student on his or her writing may feel like an accusation, but here at AWA, we consider contact a simple "fact-finding mission" with the goal of giving your student a chance to explain their work, creating understanding between instructor, student, and parent, and creating the best learning environment possible.

Here is how we work together to track down suspected plagiarism.

II.   Getting Information Together

First, the instructor is interested in finding out if the student has inadvertently or intentionally plagiarized – and how the situation can move forward.

A. Email Contact
If plagiarism is suspected, an instructor will email the parent(s) to discuss the work. We will show how the assignment is potentially plagiarized (how the instructor got the idea that an AI tool may have been used, or that a source's content may have been copied) and get feedback from both the student and parent.

B. Determining Intent (e.g., plagiarizing out of ignorance or intentionality)
If it is determined by the instructor and parent that a student plagiarized unknowingly, then the instructor/parent may decide to allow the student to resubmit the assignment. Individual instructors make the decision on whether to allow for an unintentionally plagiarized assignment to be repeated, based on the amount of content affected and plagiarized content. Often, AWA leadership will also look at suspected content (including the Senior Director, Managing Director, and/or Middle or High School Assistant Directors). If it is determined that a student plagiarized knowingly, then the instructor will adjust the grade (per below).

C. Comparing Content to Sources
Because AI and plagiarism patterns are often predictable, instructors use Internet tools to identify plagiarism. Three "red flags" found in plagiarized material that the instructor may identify include the following:

1. **AI patterns in writing** (where it is suspected that the student has used AI to create content outright because of diction and syntax often found with AI use and AI-generated text/content)
2. **Summary and paraphrase without attribution** (the student used a "switch out words" process to "write," taking original content from a source and calling it his or her own)
3. **Copy-paste plagiarism** (the student uses content outright and does not attribute the content to its source)

D. Comparing Content to Previous Student Work

Instructors are also familiar with your student's previous work from already-turned-in assignments, and they constantly compare your student's progress throughout the course of instruction. Your instructor may suspect plagiarism from identifying the following:

1. **Sudden different and often more advanced writing patterns** (e.g., a jump in vocabulary or sentence structures not often seen in the student's work)
2. **Repeated diction and syntax** common to current AI models
3. **Significant jumps** in the student's overall composition skill level

E. Sharing Findings and Making Determinations

Instructors will communicate all content concerns with the parent(s) and student in email, on a phone call, and sometimes on a Zoom call. Final determinations of plagiarism or AI use will be communicated after talking together with the parent and student. Together, we make decisions based on what is best for the student and for the assignment.

F. Family Discussion

We encourage outside discussions with your student regarding AI use and plagiarism anytime there is suspected or confirmed plagiarism, which are "teaching moments." However, ultimately because Homeschool Connections is a curriculum provider and not a school, we leave all final determinations of plagiarism outcomes up to the parent(s), who may opt for the student to rework an assignment outside of the course, to raise his or her grade to an acceptable level for the student's transcript.

III. Coming to a Resolution

A. Adjusted Grades

For Aquinas Writing Advantage (AWA) courses, students who have plagiarized content or who have intentionally or knowingly used AI to write or adjust content will receive a zero on the assignment. We take your students' learning seriously and want all students to understand the implications and consequences of plagiarism "in the real world," which can include financial and legal ramifications and penalties.

B. Counsel

If you need counsel on the issue of plagiarism with your child, AWA staff is available to help. Simply reach out.
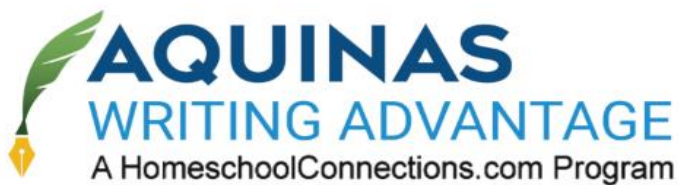
We're so glad you're here!

If you have any questions about this guide, feel free to reach out to us at any time:
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To read more about the courses and the Aquinas Writing Advantage program, visit https://awa.homeschoolconnections.com.

To check out the LIVE Course Guide, visit https://awa.homeschoolconnections.com/live-courses/.

We hope to see you in the writing courses soon!

May God Bless You in your Homeschooling Journey,

Erin & Aubrey